



UPDATES FROM THE WATER

MARCH 2021

PERU MAHI MAHI

Gear Type: Longline

Volume: 50, 507 MT (average 2009-2018)

FIP Stage: Stage 4 (Improvements in Fishing Practices or Fishery Management)

Progress Rating: B (Good Progress)

Start Date: November 2013

Peru's mahi mahi fishery supports 4,200 fishermen and serves as a key link in the marine food chain, providing sustenance for sharks, dolphins, and other ocean predators. Peru is also a leading source of the world's mahi mahi and, like Ecuador, a top exporter to the United States, where buyer influence on the fishery to make improvements is important. In 2018, exports to the U.S. generated over USD\$92 million. Approximately 1,500 fishers have been engaged directly in FIP efforts to pilot WWF's mobile electronic catch documentation system, TrazApp, to improve the collection and transparency of catch data, make it easier to receive fishing permits, and improve safety at sea by allowing vessels to be monitored in real-time.

WWF has continued to urge the Peruvian government to meet with their counterparts in Ecuador to develop a bi-national action plan for the joint management of mahi mahi, a requirement for both fisheries to meet the MSC standard. In June and October, US buyers sent letters to the Peruvian government to urge them to work with Ecuador on the development of a binational agreement for mahi mahi. The letters had an impact. In September, Ecuador and Peru met to discuss an agreement, and Peru agreed to review an existing overarching MOU between both countries to consider including management of mahi mahi. Then in November, a political crisis ensued when Congress impeached the Peruvian President removing him from office. His successor was forced to resign after six days due to violent street protests, and Francisco Sagasti was sworn in as the third President in a week on November 17. President Sagasti brought in new Ministers, and the new administration will hold office until July 2021. As a result of the administration change, the binational mahi mahi management agreement never materialized.

To date, eight mahi mahi exporting companies (COINREFRI, Fish Olg, Altamar Foods, Spring Valley Fruit/Agropesca, Mai Shi Group, Produpesca, DEXIM, and SEAFROST) representing 70% of Peru's mahi mahi exports have joined the Peru Mahi Alliance (PMA), a pre-competitive platform to advance the FIP through activity implementation, political advocacy efforts, and funding. Through its workplan developed with WWF, PMA members conducted three training workshops with fishers on how to implement best handling practices to reduce sea turtle bycatch and sent letters to the Peruvian government to urge them to develop a mahi mahi fishery management regulation and to prioritize the "formalization" (permitting) of the mahi mahi fleet. As a result of these efforts, 20 fishers have been trained on implementing sea turtle bycatch reduction measures and 22 fishing vessels have received bycatch reduction toolkits.² In addition, the Ministry of Production (PRODUCE), with WWF's support, developed a draft fishery management regulation which is now being socialized with key FIP stakeholders through several workshops. The finalized regulation is expected to be adopted by March 2021.

Priority activities expected to occur over the next several months include: continuing to conduct bycatch reduction training workshops with fishers and promoting best handling and good monitoring practices to reduce sea turtle bycatch on mahi mahi vessels; establishing a sample collection program where Peru Mahi Alliance companies provide biological mahi mahi samples to the scientific research agency (IMARPE) to support scientific research on the status and health of the stock in Peru; developing a responsible sourcing policy for PMA members to source from vessels that are implementing best practices; implementing a pilot onboard observer and camera monitoring program with IMARPE, and expanding the TrazApp pilot to test the traceability of the information generated down the supply chain with exporters and US importers and ensure it meets the US Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) requirements and Global Dialogue for Seafood Traceability (GDST) standards and guidelines.

Become a WWF FIP participant today by visiting:

<https://seafoodsustainability.org/fisheries/fishery-improvement-projects-signup>

Being a WWF FIP Participant provides a pre-competitive space for companies to engage with fisheries in their supply chains and leverage power across multiple companies to drive fishery improvements forward. By signing on to support a FIP, you are joining forces with other leaders in the industry that seek to help conserve marine ecosystems and advance the livelihoods of millions of people who depend on them.

WWF recognizes FIP participants on the industry website, SeafoodSustainability.org. WWF also works with FIP participants to communicate the benefits of FIPs among key buyers, sustainable business leaders, employees, environmental activists, and other key constituencies.

Together we can protect oceans and the food and livelihoods they can sustainably provide.

For more information or to partner with WWF, please visit SeafoodSustainability.org or contact us at info@seafoodsustainability.org

² The bycatch reduction toolkits include tools fishers can use to help release entangled and hooked sea turtles safely, including: dehookers, safe handling nets, and line cutters.